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ABSTRACT

A good language game is one that (1) requires little or no advance preparation, (2) is easy to play and yet provides the student with an intellectual challenge, (3) is short enough to occupy a convenient space during the class period, (4) entertains the students but does not cause the class to get out of control, and (5) requires no time-consuming correction of written responses afterward. The 15 games described here are classified according to size of class--Large (40-80), Medium (20-40), Small (6-20), and Very Small (up to 6); according to the level of English proficiency (Elementary, Intermediate, and Advanced); and the language nature of the game (Pronunciation, Vocabulary, Grammar, Spelling, Numbers, or Rhymes). General suggestions concerning the introducing of gameplaying in the classroom, selecting and directing appropriate games, as well as specific instructions for playing each game are given. (AMM)

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Try One of My Games

JULIA DOBSON, *English Teaching Specialist, Washington*

DO YOU EVER USE GAMES in your classroom? Many teachers of English as a second or foreign language who use games with children and teenagers—and even adults—are extremely pleased with the results. I myself have found that a good language game is a wonderful way to break the routine of classroom drill, because it provides fun and relaxation while remaining very much within the framework of language learning—and may even reinforce that learning. Furthermore, a good language game provides excellent entertainment outside the class; such games are particularly good at language clubs and parties. But what exactly *is* a good language game?

To me, a good language game is one that (*a*) requires little or no advance preparation, (*b*) is easy to play and yet provides the student with an intellectual challenge, (*c*) is short enough to occupy a convenient space during the class period, (*d*) entertains the students but does not cause the class to get out of control, and (*e*) requires no time-consuming correction of written responses afterward.

After much experimenting with language games, I have collected 15 of my own favorites that I believe fit all of the requirements set forth above. I have found that these games, which are PRIMARILY FOR TEEN-AGERS AND ADULTS but often for children as well, are always successful. So I would like to share these tested favorites of mine with you.

I have grouped the games according to the size of the class for which I think each is best suited. Some of the games should be used only with small groups, while others can be successfully played in classes ranging up to 80 students (but heaven forbid that you should have a class that large!). So, as simple guidelines for you in choosing a game, I have set up the following classifications: large classes (40–80 students), medium-size classes (20–40 students), small classes (6–20 students), and very small groups

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(up to 6). Actually, these numbers are arbitrary, but I hope they will help you choose a game suitable for your own class.

You will note that each game carries an explanatory subtitle indicating the "language" nature of the game—whether it deals with pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, spelling, numbers, or rhymes. In addition, each game carries an indication of the level of English proficiency for which I consider the game best suited. These levels are assigned the following symbols:

Elementary Level: **A**
Intermediate Level: **B**
Advanced Level: **C**

The indication of proficiency level appears in parentheses after the explanatory subtitle. Thus, the first game presented, called Category Bingo, is identified as a "Vocabulary and Spelling Game," with the symbols *B, C* indicating that it is best suited to intermediate and advanced classes. To decide which game you would like to try first, turn to the class-size division that best fits your situation. From the games given there, select one with a symbol that indicates the proficiency level of the group with which you wish to use it—*and* that you think your students will enjoy.

TO CREATE the greatest success with the game you choose, you may find the following general suggestions helpful:

1. Before introducing a game to a class, ask the students if they think they would enjoy this kind of activity. Children and teen-agers usually delight in playing a language game—and most adults do, too. Occasionally, however, an adult class may express absolutely no interest in the prospect of playing a game. If this should happen, it would probably be the better part of wisdom not to use a game at all with this group—at least at this time.

2. Choose a game that will allow as many of your students as possible to participate. If you have a large class, there are some games where a number of students will of necessity sit as the audience. But even here, there are ways of having members of the "audience" keep score and in other ways take part in the game. In small classes, you should make sure that every student has an active role in every game played. Incidentally, some of the games described in the sections for medium-size classes and large classes are equally successful in smaller groups.

3. Be sure that the game you select is within the range of your students' ability. Although I have found that all the language games given here are easy for students of English to play, you must remember that the students will be greatly challenged by the simple fact that they are playing the game in a language other than their mother tongue.

4. Do not play a game at the beginning of the class hour. Save the game for use in the middle or toward the end of the hour, when the students need a break from tiring drills.

5. Give the directions to the game very clearly, so that everyone understands exactly how to play. You may want to play a few "trial" games first, just to make sure that everyone knows the rules.

6. Direct the game yourself. Always stand in front of the class so the students can see you as you serve as the leader or referee.

7. Be sure to follow the rules of the game exactly. If you do not "stick to the rules" but permit even one student to break a rule, you will establish an unfortunate precedent that can lead to hostility among the students. It is always best, therefore, to prevent all problems of this kind, to play the game according to the rules.

8. Keep the game well under control. Even though you want your students to have a good time, you cannot allow class discipline to disintegrate. Establish a pleasant but firm tone, in order that the game can both amuse and teach the students.

9. In team games, try to have an equal number of more proficient students and less proficient students on each team, so that the teams will be balanced. This not only prevents embarrassment on the part of the weaker students but also makes the contest far more exciting.

10. Always stop playing a game before the students are ready to quit. In other words, never play a game so long that it begins to bore the participants. Similarly, do not play one game too often, causing it to lose its novelty.

AS YOU READ the directions to the games that follow, do not be discouraged by the length of some of the directions. Long directions might make you think that the game is a complicated one, but actually, as I have said, I have found all of the games here quite easy for students to learn and to play.

Large Classes

40–80 students

1. Category Bingo—*Vocabulary and Spelling Game (B, C)*

I recommend this game highly—even though you will have to take time in advance to prepare lists of words in various categories. Once you have done this, however, you can make copies of the lists and save them for future games.

Take the category *Fruit,* for instance, and list various kinds of fruits—as many fruits as you can think of. Similarly, make another list called *Vegetables* containing only the names of vegetables. Other suggested categories for lists are: *Animals, Furniture, Languages, Countries, Sports, Relatives, Musical Instruments, Flowers, Trees,* etc. Be sure, when making these lists, that each one has 16 or more entries.

Now you are ready to play the game with your students. Ask each student to draw 16 squares on a piece of paper, like the example below. Then choose one of your categories—*Animals,* for instance—and tell each student to fill in each of his 16 squares with the name of a different animal, working as rapidly as he can. Give the signal to

begin and allow exactly ten minutes for everyone to fill in the squares. You should stress, of course, that the words must be spelled correctly to count.

At the end of the time limit, a student's paper might look like this:

cat	*horse*	*fox*	*tiger*
giraffe	*lion*	*sheep*	*cow*
elephant	*wolf*	*zebra*	*bear*
ostrich	*dog*	*camel*	*monkey*

Now call out a word at random from your master *Animal* list. Be sure to cross this word off your list as you announce it. If a student hears a word that appears on his paper, he should draw a line through the word.

Just as soon as a student has four words crossed out in a line going up and down, across, or diagonally (Bingo-fashion), he shouts, "Bingo!" Then he brings his paper to you, so you can check it with your master list and make sure that you called out the words he has crossed out—and that the words are spelled correctly. If everything is correct, he is declared the winner of that game, and you can begin a new Bingo game in another category.

If your students have a limited vocabulary to draw on for this game, you can write all of the items from one of your master lists on the blackboard. Explain the meaning of each word, then have each student select any 16 of the words on the board to fill in the squares on his paper. Then erase the words from the blackboard and play the game as outlined above.

2. Spelling Bee—*Spelling Game (A, B, C)*

Before you plan to play this enjoyable game with your students, make a list of words that the class has studied. Include in the list words that are particularly challenging to spell. Occasionally, you may find words on your list that sound alike but are spelled differently, such as *flower* and *flour*. Be sure to put a little mark beside these words to remind yourself that you will have to define these words when you give them out in class.

When your list is complete, choose 20 students and divide them into two teams of equal number. Have one team stand on one side of the room and the other team on the opposite side, so the two teams are facing each other. The remaining students will serve as the audience.

Explain to the students that you will "give" a word from your list to the first student on Team I. He must spell the word aloud. If he spells it correctly, he remains standing. You will then give a different word to the first student on Team II to spell. If this student spells his word correctly, you will give a new word to the second student on Team I—and so on, with the students on the two teams alternating turns in spelling the words.

Each person has only one chance to spell his word. If he misspells it, he must leave his team and sit down. Even if he spells it correctly, he must sit down if he mispronounces one of the letters. For instance, if a student spelling the word *boy* pronounces the letter *b* as he would in his native language and not as it sounds in English—as *be* (as in the verb *to be*)—he is disqualified.

Whenever anyone makes an error in a word—either a spelling or a pronunciation error—the word goes to the next player on the other team. Thus, a sample game might go something like this:

YOU: **clock**
TEAM I
Student A: **c-l-o-c-k**
YOU: **knife**
TEAM II
Student A: **k-n-i-f-e**
YOU: **yellow**
TEAM I
Student B: **y-e-l-o-w**

This student has made an error, so he must sit down.

YOU: **yellow**
TEAM II
Student B: **y-e-l-l-o-w**
YOU: **think**
TEAM I
Student C: **t-h-i-n-k**

etc.

When the last player on a team has had his turn, the play returns to the first student on the team. The game can continue until only one player is left standing. If you do not have enough time for this, you may want to set a time limit before the game begins. When the time limit is up, the team with the most members left standing is declared the winner.

3. What Would You Do If . . . ?—*Grammar Game (B, C)*

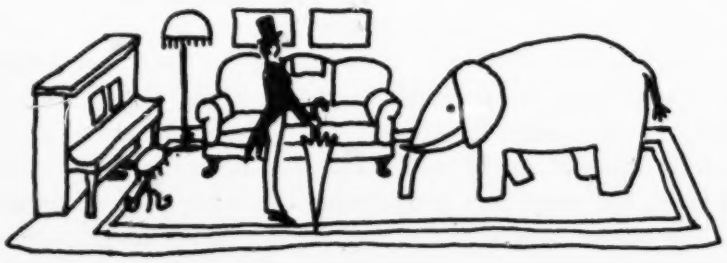
This is such an amusing game that your class will probably want to play it often.

Begin the game by dividing the class into two teams of equal number. Designate one as Team I and the other

as Team II.[1] Then, write the following on the blackboard:

Team I (or Reds)	*Team II* (or Blues)
What would you do if . . . ?	I would . . .

Now give everyone on Team I a slip of paper and explain that each person on the team must write an imaginative question beginning with *What would you do if . . . ?* For example, someone might write *What would you do if an elephant walked into this room?* Someone else might write *What would you do if you found a fly in your soup?* etc.



While Team I is following these directions, give everyone on Team II a piece of paper. Explain that each member of this team must write an imaginative sentence beginning *I would. . . .* For instance, someone could write *I would buy a purple umbrella.* Another person might write *I would sing a happy song,* etc.

When everyone has finished writing his assigned sentences, collect all of Team I's questions in one box and all of Team II's answers in another. You, or students on the team (or in the audience), can now draw and read first a question and then an answer. This game is sometimes called "Cross Questions and Crooked Answers"; the fun comes from the fact that the questions and answers are so utterly and ridiculously unrelated. Some of the results will be very funny indeed!

4. Alphabet Soup—*Vocabulary Game (A, B, C)*

This is a game that 14 students at a time can play, with the other students serving as an interested participating audience.

First, select 14 students and divide them into two teams of equal number. Then have the students on each team line up one behind the other to form two rows facing the class.

Once the rows are formed, assign each student a number from 1 to 14. The first student in line on one team will be 1, the second 2, the third student 3, and so on up through 7. The first student on the other team will be 8, the second 9, and so on up through 14. Be sure that everyone knows what his number is, because the numbers are an important part of the game.

Next, choose two students from the audience—one to act as timekeeper and the other to record on the chalkboard the points the teams make, in large figures that everyone can see. If possible, equip the timekeeper with a watch having a "second" hand, so he can time 20-second intervals. (If no watch is available, the timekeeper should count to 20 quietly and then "call time.")

Now explain that you will call out a number belonging to someone on Team I. Along with the number, you call out a letter of the alphabet (any letter except *x*, *y*, or *z*).

For instance, you might call out, "3–*s*." At this moment, the timekeeper begins timing and the student who is 3 must immediately step to one side of the line so the audience can see him. Just as fast as he can, he must name all of the words beginning with *s* that he can think of before his 20-second limit is up. For example, he might say *see, shoe, sing, sell, snake, slow, shine, say. . . .* Just after *say,* the timekeeper indicates that his time limit is up, so he steps back to his place in line. Since the contestant called out 8 correct words, he chalks up 8 points for his team. The recorder notes these points on the board under the name of the proper team.

Now it's the turn of the other team. You call out a number belonging to a member of that team, along with another letter, and the appropriate person steps out of line and gives as many words as he can beginning with the designated letter. Of course, it is very important for everyone on the team to be alert, so that the correct player steps out as promptly as possible to start giving the words. Otherwise, any confusion will make the team lose precious seconds.

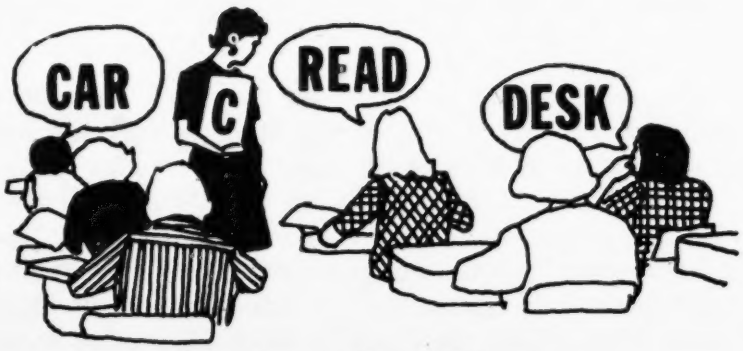
As the game continues, the teams alternate turns until each player has had a chance to win points for his team. At the end of the contest, the scorekeeper adds up the points for each team and declares the team with the most points the winner.

You may want to prepare a list in advance for calling out the numbers and letters, so there will be no duplication and everyone will have one chance. Such a list might look like this:

Team I	*Team II*
5 – B	8 – N
4 – G	10 – J
1 – A	9 – C
6 – R	11 – H
3 – L	14 – U
2 – S	13 – T
7 – I	12 – E

Also, you may want to make the game a continuing contest in which two new teams, composed of students who have not yet had a chance to play, compete each day or each week. A student can keep a record of the winning teams along with the names of the team members, so that eventually the winning teams can play each other to determine the winner of the class championship.

[1] Here, and in any other "team" games, you might want to "personalize" the game by having each side quickly choose a team name, such as a color or an animal or a bird—or the name of a local sports team currently in the news. Thus the "Reds" could play against the "Blues," or the "Cats" against the "Dogs" or the "Hawks" against the "Eagles." With such team names as these, the students would be using English here, too. But here, as elsewhere in conducting the games, you would have to make sure this aspect of the game did not get out of control—or did not use up too much game time.



Medium-Size Classes

20–40 students

1. Fast Thinking—*Vocabulary Game (B, C)*

Before you play this game with your class for the first time, draw each letter of the alphabet clearly on a piece of stiff cardboard or heavy paper. Each of these "cards" should be about the size of the FORUM, with the letter large enough to be clearly visible to students in the back of the room. After you complete the front of a card, indicate lightly in pencil on the back the letter that appears on the front. This allows you to identify the letter readily when you show the card to the class. (You can make two sets of these alphabet cards if you wish.)

Now shuffle the cards thoroughly, so letters do not appear in alphabetical order. Next, divide your class into two teams of equal number. Have one team sit on one side of the room and the other team on the other side. Appoint a captain for each team and have the captains seated in the front row, so that each captain can easily collect the cards that his team wins.

Explain that you will draw one card at a time and hold it up chest-high with the letter facing the group. As you draw a letter, you will call out the name of a "part of speech," such as noun, adjective, verb, adverb, etc.

The first person who shouts a word (only words that are not capitalized are accepted) in the stated category and beginning with the letter on the card wins the card for his team. You will then give this card to the appropriate team captain.

For instance, if you hold up a card with the letter *B* and call out "Adjective," perhaps someone on Team II will quickly shout "Beautiful." Since this is a good answer, you will hand the *B*-card to the captain of Team II.

Sometimes several players may call out a word almost simultaneously. You will have to establish who was first and what his word was. In case of a tie (students from both teams calling out correct responses at exactly the same time), no one will win the card, and you will keep it as a bonus to be given with the next card.

It may be that occasionally none of the students can think of a word beginning with the specified letter in the required category. When this happens, you return the letter to the stack and draw another one.

When all of the cards have been given out, or when you reach the end of the time limit established at the beginning of the game, the team holding the most cards is declared winner. (Be sure to save the cards for future games.)

2. Chain Spelling—*Spelling Game (A, B, C)*

This is a game that provides enjoyable practice in spelling. It is played as follows:

With the students standing beside their desks, have one student begin the game by pronouncing a word and spelling it. The next student must pronounce and spell a word that begins with the last letter of the first word spelled, and so forth.

For example, the first student might say, "Car—c-a-r." Then the next player must think of a word beginning with the final letter of *car*, which is *r;* so he might say "Read—r-e-a-d." The third student might say "Dog—d-o-g," and so on.

If a player cannot think of a word, or begins a word with the wrong letter, or misspells his word, or pronounces a letter in the word incorrectly, he must sit down and is out of the game. The game continues until only one student is left standing. If your students are fairly advanced, you may wish to limit the words to a special category, such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, etc. This makes the game even more challenging.

3. Buzz—*Number Game (A, B, C)*

This game is always a great success and provides the students with excellent practice with numbers.

According to the rules of the game, 7, or any *multiple* of 7 (such as 14 or 35), or any number containing 7 (such as 17 or 47) is "forbidden" and must not be said during the course of counting.

One player begins by saying "One," the next player says "Two," the next player, "Three," and so on up through six. Then the player whose turn it is to say "Seven" must say the word *Buzz* instead. The game continues with the next player saying "Eight," the next "Nine," and so forth.

A sample game might go something like this:

STUDENT A:	One	STUDENT J:	Ten
STUDENT B:	Two	STUDENT K:	Eleven
STUDENT C:	Three	STUDENT L:	Twelve
STUDENT D:	Four	STUDENT M:	Thirteen
STUDENT E:	Five	STUDENT N:	**Buzz**
STUDENT F:	Six	STUDENT O:	Fifteen
STUDENT G:	**Buzz**	STUDENT P:	Sixteen
STUDENT H:	Eight	STUDENT Q:	**Buzz**
STUDENT I:	Nine	STUDENT R:	Eighteen

The game should be played as fast as possible—which means that the students have to think quickly. If a player completely forgets to say "Buzz" at the right moment, he is out of the game. Even if he starts to say "Sev-," for instance, and quickly adds "Buzz," he is out of the game.

Sometimes a player will mistakenly say "Buzz" for a number that does not contain a seven or is not a multiple of seven. When this happens, he, too, is eliminated from the game. In addition, any player who miscounts is out of the game. For example, if Student A says "Thirty-one," Student B says "Thirty-two," and Student C says "Thirty-four," Student C is out of the game.

When a player is eliminated from the game, the next player begins with "One" and the game starts over. If you ask your students to stand beside their desks while playing the game, you can easily handle the problem of eliminating players who make mistakes by simply asking them to sit down. The game continues until only one player remains standing. He then is declared the winner.

After your students have played the game a great deal, they may reach the 70s—where each number (71, 72, etc.) must be rendered as "Buzz." In later games you can vary the challenge by having either 4 or 6 as the "forbidden" number. Incidentally, even though "Buzz" can be played to good advantage in classes containing 20–40 students, it is also an excellent game in smaller classes.

4. Vocabulary Race—*Vocabulary Game (B, C)*

This game revolves around quick thinking. Have one student come to the front of the room and tell him to think of any three-letter word. When he has selected a word, he calls on someone in the class and announces his word clearly. The student called on must then give a word beginning with each of the three letters within a certain time limit or else he will have to take the first student's place in front of the class.

For example, if the first student says, "John Wilson—man," then John Wilson might say in rapid succession "Me—apple—new," within the time limit. Since John Wilson has won the race against the time limit, the student standing in front of the class had to think of another word. He calls out, "Mary Smith—old." Mary Smith says "Orange—little. . . ." But she cannot think of a third word in time, so she has to go to the front of the class.

To handle the problem of timing, you can ask one student to act as timekeeper and he can quietly start counting to ten just as soon as a student's name is called. If the student cannot think of three appropriate words by the time the timekeeper reaches ten, he loses the race.

It may be that someone in the room had a watch with a "second" hand; in this case a certain number of seconds can be established as the time limit, making timing considerably easier. You will, of course, adjust the time limit to the ability of your class. If you would like to make the game especially challenging, you can retain the same time limit but play the game with four- or even five-letter words.

You may find when playing the game that the student who stands in front of the class has a hard time thinking of a word with the specified number of letters. To avoid this problem, you can prepare a number of slips of paper in advance with a word written on each one. Simply hand one of these pieces of paper to the student and he will call on someone, reading the word that appears on the paper.

Small Classes

6–20 students

1. Pronunciation Contest—*Pronunciation Game (A)*

You have to prepare this game in advance but the preparations are really quite simple. They are as follows:

Make a list of the words that the students have studied but which they often mispronounce. If you are teaching Spanish-speaking students, for instance, you might include the following words in your list, since they pose special problems for Spanish speakers:

ice
very
three
ship
jet

If you are teaching students of another language background, you will, of course, choose words THEY find difficult to pronounce.

Once you have listed the words, print each word on a card. Then, in class, divide your students into two teams of equal number. Have one team stand on one side of the room and the other team on the opposite side.

Explain that you will walk over to the first student on one team and show him a card containing a word. When the student sees the word, he must say it aloud. (He is given only one chance to pronounce the word.)

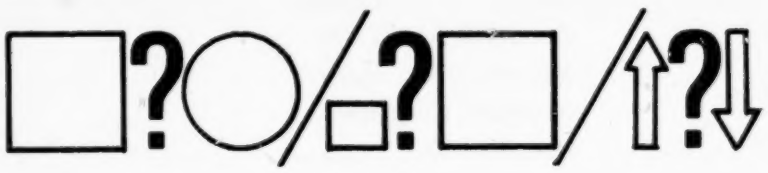
If he pronounces the word correctly, he remains standing. If he mispronounces it, he must sit down—and you show the same word to the first student on the other team. If this player pronounces it correctly, you give a different word to the next player on the first team, and so on.

The game can continue until only one player is left. This player will then be declared the winner of the contest. If there is not enough time for a lengthy contest, you can set a time limit (such as five minutes) at the beginning of the game. Then, when the time is up, the team with the larger number of players still standing is declared the winner.

2. Classroom "Twenty Questions"—*Grammar Game (B, C)*

This is an excellent guessing game in which one person chooses a visible object in the room and the other students try to guess what it is by asking questions.

Suppose that you, for instance, begin the game by mentally selecting a green hair ribbon that one of the girl students is wearing. Tell the students that you have chosen an object and that each student in turn can ask one question about it. You will give a complete answer to the question.



After several questions have been asked, the person whose turn is next may think he knows what the object is. In this case, he can ask, "Is it a (the) . . .? If he has guessed correctly, he wins the game and becomes the person who chooses the object in the second game. You will need someone to keep count of the number of questions asked. If no one has guessed the object after twenty questions, the person who selected the object wins the game and can choose another object for the second game.

The game might go something like this if the green hair ribbon is the object to be guessed:

STUDENT A: Is it as large as the map on the wall?
ANSWER: No, it isn't as large as the map.

STUDENT B: Is it made of metal or cloth?
ANSWER: It's made of cloth.

STUDENT C: Does it belong to a student?
ANSWER: Yes, it belongs to a student.

STUDENT D: Is it in front of me or behind me?
ANSWER: It's in front of you.

STUDENT E: Is it square?
ANSWER: No, it isn't square.

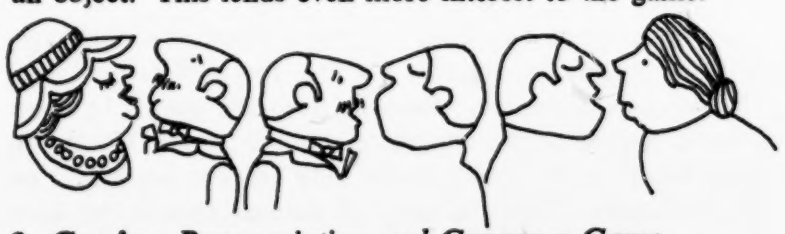
STUDENT F: Is it cheap or expensive?
ANSWER: It's cheap.

STUDENT G: What color is it?
ANSWER: It's green.

STUDENT H: Is it Mary's hair ribbon?
ANSWER: Yes, it is. You've won the game!

At this point, Student H comes to the front of the room and mentally selects a new visible object for the next game.

If your students are quite advanced, you may wish to play the original game of "Twenty Questions." In this form of the game, only questions that take a Yes or No answer are permitted, and objects not visible in the room may be chosen. Another variation of the game is to select a famous person, living or dead, to be guessed, instead of an object. This lends even more interest to the game.



3. Gossip—*Pronunciation and Grammar Game (A, B, C)*

Have your students sit in a circle. Whisper a phrase or sentence rapidly to one student. He then whispers what he has just heard (or thinks he heard) to the person on his right. This student repeats what he just heard to the third student, and so on all around the circle.

When the phrase or sentence reaches the last student, he says aloud the phrase or sentence as he heard it. Both you and the students may be surprised to see how much the phrase or sentence changed as it went around the group.

You can now begin a new game by having another person think of a new phrase or sentence. Remember to stress that in passing the utterance from one person to another, it must be said rapidly and ONLY ONCE. Otherwise, the game loses much of its fun.

4. Simon Says—*Grammar Game (B, C)*

This is a good group game that provides your students with practice in forming and following commands.

The students can sit in their usual seats. Explain that one person will serve as Simon. (If you are introducing the game for the first time, you should serve as Simon for one or two games.)

Simon will give a series of commands, such as:

Simon says, "Put your left hand up."
Simon says, "Point to the blackboard."
Simon says, "Clap your hands."

The person who is Simon will do all of the things he asks the group to do, and they will imitate him as he does each thing. Then, to trick the group (and this is the

point of the game), Simon gives a command without first saying "Simon says." As before, Simon performs the act called for—but this time the group should NOT imitate him —they should not do anything at all. Anyone who does imitate Simon loses the game and must become the new Simon. If several persons are caught doing something that Simon did not say, Simon chooses one of them to take his place, and the game begins again.

You should constantly encourage the students to play the game fast to make it really enjoyable. A sample might go like this:

SIMON: Simon says, "Nod your head."
GROUP: Everyone nods his head.
SIMON: Simon says, "Point to the door."
GROUP: Everyone points to the door.
SIMON: Clap your hands.
GROUP: One student claps his hands. The other students sit still. At this point, the student who clapped his hands becomes Simon.

A variation of the game, making it more of a challenge, is to have Simon purposely confuse the players by giving the group a command which he does not obey. In other words, Simon might announce, "Simon says, 'Hands on your head' "—but at the same time he puts his hands on his shoulders. The students, of course, should do what Simon SAYS, not what he DOES.

Very Small Groups

up to 6

1. Word Psychology—*Vocabulary Game (A, B, C)*

Have the players sit at their desks in a circle or semicircle. Announce that during the game everyone will participate in the same rhythmic action pattern, which you will demonstrate as follows:

First, strike the top of your desk lightly twice with the palms of your hands; raise your hands and clap them twice; then snap your fingers twice. Do all three steps rhythmically and in equal time, and when you complete them, begin the pattern over again without a loss of the rhythmic beat. (It is best when playing the game for the first time to establish a relatively slow beat. As the players become more proficient, you can gradually adopt a faster beat.)

Once the students have mastered this pattern in unison, you can explain that everyone goes through the first two steps together. Then, during the third step, when everyone snaps his fingers, the first player says a word aloud—any word that comes to his mind.

The pattern begins over again; and the next player, striking the desk and clapping his hands in unison with the other players, must say another word aloud as he snaps his fingers. If he loses the beat of the rhythm as he says the word, or repeats a word that another player has said, or cannot think of any word at all, he is out of the game. The object of the game, thus, is to say a new word whenever it is your turn without losing the rhythm of the game.

You and your students will be surprised to see what fun this game can be, because frequently a player will lose the beat or repeat a word or say something so funny that the next player will not be able to think of a new word. One by one the players will be eliminated until one person wins the game. If your students are advanced, you can establish word categories that limit the words in one game to nouns, words in the next game to verbs, etc. This makes the game even more challenging.

2. Fun with Rhymes—*Rhyming Game (A, B, C)*

Before you introduce the game, write down a list of words that the students know. These should be words that have rhyming counterparts also familiar to the students.

Now tell your students that you will read a word from the list. The first player must give a word that rhymes with the word you have given. The second player must give another word that rhymes with the word you gave—and so on, around the class. If a player cannot think of a word or if he gives one that does not rhyme, or makes any other sort of mistake, he is out of the game. At this point, you give a new word, and the game continues until there is one winner.

A sample game might go like this:

YOU: though
STUDENT A: know
STUDENT B: show
STUDENT C: sew
STUDENT D: _____

Since Student D cannot think of another word that rhymes, he is out of the game, and you begin with a new word as follows:

YOU: tree
STUDENT E: he
STUDENT F: key
STUDENT A: see

This game can turn into an excellent contest if your students have good vocabularies, but it is fun for beginning students as well.

3. Ghost—*Spelling Game (B, C)*

Have the students sit in a circle or semicircle. Explain that the object of this spelling game is to avoid being the person who completes a word as one letter is added to another letter around the group.

One student (number 1) begins the game by thinking of a word. (Any word is acceptable except proper nouns.) When the student has a word, he announces THE FIRST

LETTER of the word. (Perhaps he thinks of *books* and announces *B*.) The next student (number 2) thinks of a word beginning with the letter just announced. He tries to discard all words that might end on him as the game progresses. (Say, for example, that six are playing. *Blow* would be a good word, for it would end on number 4. *Babies* would end on number 6. *Believe* would end on number 1 in the second go-around. But *beautify*, with eight letters, would in the second go-around end on number 2. So number 2 avoids *beautify*.)

For example, the game might go like this if six students are playing:

FIRST STUDENT: **p** (thinking of *pie*)
SECOND STUDENT: **l** (thinking of *place*)
THIRD STUDENT: **a** (thinking of *play*)
FOURTH STUDENT: **n** (thinking of *plane* and forgetting that p-l-a-n spells *plan*.)

Because the fourth student has ended a word, he becomes "one third of a ghost." The game begins again, this time with the fifth student announcing the first letter of his new word. The sixth student continues and is followed by the first student, etc.

If during the game any player completes a word of three letters or more, he is automatically "one third of a ghost"; if he completes a second word, he becomes "two thirds of a ghost"; if he completes a third word, he is a "full ghost"—and is out of the game. The game continues until everyone becomes a "full ghost" except one player, who is declared the winner.

There are two additional rules that you should keep in mind. First, in this version of "Ghost," players may make two-letter words without penalty. For instance, if the first player says "s," and the second player says "o," the second player does not become "a third of a ghost." A three-letter or longer word, however, gets an immediate penalty—changes the player into "a third of a ghost."

The second rule is that if a player cannot think of a word containing the letters he has been given—or if he doubts that the preceding player is actually spelling a word—he can say to the preceding player, "I challenge you." The preceding player must then announce the word he had in mind. If the player has in mind a real word and is spelling it correctly, then the person who challenged him becomes "a third of a ghost"—or increases his ghostly status by a third. If the player challenged is bluffing and has no word, or if he has a word but is misspelling it, then HE becomes "a third of a ghost."

This game can be very enjoyable, and students will find it an excellent way to practice spelling and in other ways to familiarize themselves with English words.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE to investigate the subject of language games further, you might want to consult a collection called *Games for Second Language Learning*, by Gertrude Nye Dorry. This is a small 58-page paperback published in 1966 by McGraw-Hill Book Company, 330 West 42nd Street, New York, New York 10036. It costs a little over one dollar. There are other collections of language games, but I have found that these are mainly for native speakers and thus are not suitable for our purposes. In any case, you can have a good start with the games suggested in this article. Eventually, you may even invent a language game of your own!

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